

Senator Merkley (Democrat, OR)
Representatives Blumenauer and Wu (Democrat, OR)

PORTLAND HARBOR SUPERFUND SITE - Willamette River near Portland, Oregon

QUESTION: What is the status of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site?

ANSWER:

The Draft Remedial Investigation (RI) Report for Portland Harbor was submitted to EPA by the Lower Willamette Group (LWG), a group of potentially responsible parties, on October 27, 2009. EPA and several government agencies and tribes are now completing a thorough technical review.

- EPA recently provided the LWG with comments on two sections of the report, the baseline human health and ecological risk assessments.
- EPA found that the procedures and analyses were generally acceptable, but some contaminants of concern and lines of evidence were prematurely eliminated from the risk assessment, and the document is not complete without this information.
- EPA and the LWG are working to resolve these issues and do not expect significant delays to the overall schedule.
- The RI and risk assessment reports are a significant milestone for the project
- The RI report provides a comprehensive evaluation of contamination in sediment, groundwater, surface water and stormwater.

Work is underway on the Portland Harbor Feasibility Study (FS). EPA has been scoping the FS both internally and collaboratively with the LWG since early 2009.

- The Feasibility Study, which will evaluate cleanup options for Portland Harbor, is scheduled for completion in late 2010.

If the RI and FS reports meet EPA expectations, EPA anticipates issuing the Proposed Plan for public comment in 2011 and a Record of Decision in 2012.

Portland Harbor was placed on the National Priorities List in 2000. A century of industrial uses left the site with a legacy of contamination including metals (copper, lead, zinc), pesticides, PCBs, petroleum products, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, and dioxin/furans.

CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES:

- Recent issues raised by Congressman Blumenauer and Senator Merkley include the schedule, cost and the adequacy of EPA resources to support the Feasibility Study for Portland Harbor.
- Congressman Blumenauer also inquired about a recent Oregonian article regarding the EPA comments on the risk assessments.